

Volume 20, No. 24 • October 4, 2013



# Nation

## Quebec's colonial history



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## Natural Environment Technology (NET) Program Student Profile



Name: Curtis Polson Age: 20  
Home community: Waswanipi

### What interested you about the NET program?

I found out about the program at a local career fair and it immediately caught my attention. I was really interested in being able to study "in the bush" and work outdoors. I also really liked the idea that I could study close to home.

### What do you like best about the program?

I like that I have a chance to work in the field with elders from local communities. In environment, we really need both both scientific and traditional knowledge. I also like the teachers who work closely with the students. They work hard and are very nice people.

I WAS REALLY INTERESTED IN BEING  
ABLE TO STUDY "IN THE BUSH" AND  
WORK OUTDOORS. I ALSO REALLY  
LIKED THE IDEA THAT I COULD STUDY  
CLOSE TO HOME.



### What do you hope to do in the future?

I hope to work for a regional Cree organization that helps communities to identify and stabilize wildlife populations as well as to identify and find solutions to environmental problems that them.

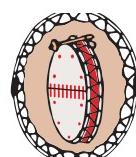
### Is there anything you would like to add?

High School is tough and students often face many problems during this time. Suicide, drugs, alcohol and bullying are all obstacles you are likely to face at some point. My dad used to always tell me "What's at the end of every storm? A nice calm sunny day!" Think about this before doing bad things to yourself or others. Remember that high school is just a stepping-stone but education is the key to a better future and a better life. So, I encourage everyone to finish high school. That will be something you will never regret. Keep focused and you will make it. Don't give up on your goals, they are meant to be achieved.

### Why would you recommend the program to others?

I think that it is important for Cree communities to be aware of the environmental issues that surround them. I hope to help my people to fully understand environmental issues and how this corresponds with the larger national perspective.

For more information, contact Kyle McKee at 418-748-4996 ext. 224 or your local Niskamoon Coordinator.



# International embarrassment

by Will Nicholls

The son of a soldier, I grew up as an army brat on several Canadian Forces bases. In my teens at CFB Petawawa, I knew many of the soldiers who went to Cyprus, where some 29,000 Canadians served between 1964 and 1993 as part of the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping force that is still in operation on the divided Mediterranean island.

Even though many came back with combat fatigue, they were proud to be a part of a mission to prevent war and ensure respect for human rights. Canada had a great reputation as force for peace and justice back then.

That formerly admirable reputation is rather tattered these days. Many of the countries Canada once credibly criticized for human rights violations are now questioning Canada's record in this regard.

It was quite evident in the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review of Canada two weeks ago. The Canadian government rejected 40 of the 162 recommendations contained in the report, and questioned its validity because some countries with questionable human rights records were allowed to criticize the Harper administration.

A number of the rejections concerned the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which, in a revealing statement, the Conservative government said is only "an aspirational, non-binding instrument."

This is a document that, if respected, would change the fundamental relationship between First Nations and Canada. So, we shouldn't be surprised that, even though his government signed the declaration after years of foot-dragging, Stephen Harper refuses to respect it.

The areas of greatest concern for Canada are provisions dealing with lands, territories and resources; free, prior and informed consent when used as a veto; self-government without recognition of the importance of negotiations; intellectual property; military

issues; and the need to achieve an appropriate balance between the rights and obligations of Indigenous peoples, member states and third parties.

Basically traditional lands and the resources they contain would belong to the Indigenous group that occupied the land. They would be entitled to determine their own government. They would have a right to their own genetics. They would be able to say no to military use of their territory and more. It is understandable that the Conservatives would oppose these progressive measures since, for them, unrestricted resource exploitation by its corporate supporters overrides any other interest.

In addition, recent Supreme Court decisions have further watered down collective rights and a community's ability to veto a project if approved by government.

The greatest concern expressed by several countries was over the unchecked violence against Aboriginal women in Canada, especially the largely unsolved cases of murdered and missing women. But even here, Canada's UN envoy rejected calls to develop a comprehensive national review to end violence against Aboriginal women.

Countries we associate with poor rights records, as Iran, Cuba and Belarus, supported the call for an investigation into the disappearances, murder and sexual abuse of Aboriginal women in Canada.

This is not new. During the last review in 2009, several countries said Canada should address the concerns of its Aboriginal population. And while some nations said they admired Canada's past actions as an international peacemaker, current policies that diminish justice and human rights in Canada are a need to be corrected. The fable fits; Canada shouldn't throw stones in its own glass house. Let's fix our own foundations first.

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McGill's powwow

photo by:  
Akiva Levitas

## Harvest Moon

by Sonny Orr



Neil Young's classic song Harvest Moon plays on the local radio, wafting through the halls and rooms of most homes, their doors wide open to welcome the warmth of a late fall season that most people call Indian Summer. This usually happens after September 21, when the day and night are of equal length, 12 hours each. During this lull of beautiful weather, there are signs of harvesting everywhere you look. The moose call gets dusted off, the nets are set for fat fish, and the last berries – usually cranberries, blackberries and gooseberries – get gelled into delicious jams.

The final fall geese, reluctant to leave, complement the succulent ducks of James and Hudson bays for supper. The snow geese, a popular table fare, seem more abundant than ever. One year, perhaps even the saltwater geese, Brants as we know them, may come back in the vast numbers that would block the skies. Lumbering at ground level, the black bear fattens up for winter, hopefully for some good hunter's feast. The caribou are on the move again, heading for a winter in the taiga forests, a few hundred kilometres south of the tree line.

Ptarmigan, partridge and grouse are also fat for the winter, rounded off by the staple skinny rabbit. Muskrats make the menu for those who enjoy making artwork out of the furs and the great taste of 'rat. Of course, the highly valued beaver, which are actually considered to be pests in the south, come in for a close number two of all things great to harvest off the northern lands.

In the south, in large areas devoid of trees, machines drone away in their

robotic harvesting to produce enough food to feed the millions in rural and urban areas. Back home, the drone of the outboard or whine of the snowmobile tries hard to break through the thick silence of the north.

Today our harvesting still provides us with more than just protein, it keeps us mindful that these ways come with the knowledge of centuries upon centuries of respect for the lands and waters that provide for us. I like to think that the grocery store just keeps us full, but not as nourishing as good old country foods. That said, I have to admit that an occasional Twinkie is a welcome treat.

At a conference some time ago, the meaning behind the mysterious disappearances of the Cree workers during these important months arose amid confusion of why someone could leave their jobs just like that. After an hour of explanations, some respect came out from the crowds of attendees. At last, the truth was revealed. In the south, everyone did their disappearing act during the summer months, so that the hard-working farmers could do their stuff, no time for school!

In many ways we aren't that much different from the farmers, except for the tools. Instead of a pitchfork, we have a hatchet. Instead of a tractor, we got a 4-wheeler. Heck, even the farmers like country music!

I, on the other hand, am content to chew on a fat goose wing, and I'm satisfied by our stock of meats, fowls and fish in our pantry. If only we had turkeys this far north...

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Canada

# Beginning of a new era

## Cree leaders and Jamesien mayors organizing new regional government

by Jesse Staniforth

The first meeting of the Governance Implementation Committee for a New Regional Government September 19 was history in the making.

Mandated by the Agreement on Governance in Eeyou Istchee James Bay Territory, the committee is responsible for ensuring the regional government is operational by January 1, 2014, and makes a smooth transition from the Municipalité of Baie James (MBJ) political structure.

At stake is control of Category III lands (as defined by the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement), which will be jointly overseen by a government made up of 11 Cree representatives and 11 representatives of the Jamesien communities.

Bill Namagoose, executive director of the Grand Council of the Crees (GCC) said this is all new, as a regional government didn't exist in the past. "It was all separate," he said. "The Quebec government gave the mayors entire jurisdiction on Category III lands 10 years ago. The new agreement we have now reversed that, so the Crees will be participants."

The government is split 50/50 between Crees and Jamesiens and will remain so for the first 10 years, after which time it will review demographics and democratically implement any changes to better reflect the population of the territory. That could mean greater Cree control in the future.

"The Cree population has been increasing, whereas the Jamesien population is going down, according to the latest statistics," said Namagoose. "But that could change."

Namagoose said that this isn't just a bureaucratic shuffle: these changes will eventually mean big things to the average person in Eeyou Istchee.

"They have a voice in how the territory is going to be managed now," he said. "Before they didn't – it was totally up to MBJ. There'll be no more bylaws that interfere with Crees' hunting rights, no more bylaws prescribing what kind of traditional structures we can build."

Critical changes will take place in the area of land use, Namagoose emphasized. The new government will prepare a land-use plan to submit to the province in order to prevent conflict between traditional and contemporary uses of the land.

"Crees will be part of the decision-making process now," he said. "We will be notified now of any mining claims. We weren't before. The Quebec government has undertaken to send a list of mining claims to the Cree."

Namagoose pointed out that the new powers of the regional government will be far more effective than the current "duty to consult" stipulations covering industrial development on Category III lands.

"There'll be no more bylaws that interfere with Crees' hunting rights, no more bylaws prescribing what kind of traditional structures we can build."



Bill Namagoose

"The duty to consult is kind of hollow. We don't have any powers or jurisdiction or say in anything," he said. "Duty to consult sometimes just means a phone call – then you've been consulted. It's not as strong as people think."

The goal of the GCC, he said, is to expand engagement in processes beyond simple consultation.

"Engagement is much stronger than consultation," said Namagoose. "Any nation, that's what they want. Consultation is good, but it's not good when you don't have engagement. That's what the land-use plans are about – the planning documents that Crees will be making over decades, even the next 100 years."

There will be a two-day information session in Val-d'Or about the new government October 30-31. It will also be live-streamed for those unable to attend in person.

"We've invited chiefs and councils and their staffs and other people who are interested in [learning more about] the agreements we've signed with Canada and Quebec. We signed the Paix des Braves 10 years ago, and some of the people in office now were not around when the agreement came into place. They have to make decisions to do with the Paix des Braves [and other agreements], so they want to make sure they're briefed on what it's all about."

However, Namagoose said what the new regional government is about is expanded influence over the lands the Eeyouch have lived on for thousands of years.

"We will be part of the planning of the territory," he said. "We have Cree presence, and we're bringing our political power. Then we'll exercise the powers that are defined in the legislation. We're part of the government: that gives you a lot."

# Nation

You haven't seen the new Nation website?

- > Integrated social media
- > More pictures and videos
- > New visual appeal
- > Easier navigation

Visit us at  
[www.nationnews.ca](http://www.nationnews.ca)

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Nation Magazine website. At the top, there's a banner for 'the Nation' magazine, which has been serving Eeyou Istchee since 1993. Below the banner, there's a navigation bar with links for 'ABOUT US', 'ADVERTISE', 'ARCHIVE', 'CREE LEGENDS', 'PAST ISSUES', and 'CONTACT US'. On the right side of the header, there are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Google+, along with a search bar.

The main content area features several news articles with accompanying images:

- Courses coming to you: Eeyou Istchee's upcoming career programs** by Amy German. An image shows a person working on a piece of wood with power tools.
- AGA gala honours five Cree students** (September 9, 2013). An image shows a young woman smiling.
- Cree hockey players to watch for this season** (September 9, 2013). An image shows a person playing ice hockey.
- Theresa Spence wins second term in Atikamekw** (September 9, 2013). An image shows Theresa Spence wearing a fur-trimmed hat and coat.
- Confronting racism in social and traditional media** (September 9, 2013). An image shows a group of people in a classroom setting.
- Back to school tips for students of all ages** (September 9, 2013). An image shows a group of students sitting in a classroom.

On the right sidebar, there are sections for 'UPDATES', 'EDITORIALS', 'CREATING CANADA', 'A PROCLAMATION', 'Aboriginal Entrepreneur's Conference', '2013', and 'October 4, 2013'. There are also sections for 'RECENT COMMENTS' and 'IN BRIEF'.

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Republic of Zambia's Minister of Chiefs and traditional affairs and Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come



The Chinese ambassador to Zambia and Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come



Zambian Chief Munokayla Mukuni and Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come

## Grand Chief Coon Come visits southern Africa

by Ieteronni Beauvais

The opportunity to share Indigenous values and histories arose when a chiefdom in Zambia, looking to improve the living conditions of its people, enlisted the help of Eeyou Istchee's Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come.

At the invitation of Zambian Chief Munokayla Mukuni, Coon Come travelled to Livingstone, Zambia and attended the annual Bene Mukuni traditional ceremony, held near the picturesque Victoria Falls.

There Coon Come addressed Mukuni, his people and everyone at the ceremony. "I was asked to speak about our history, our land, our way of life, our relationship with developers and with governments, and our governance agreement."

The event was attended by numerous dignitaries, ambassadors, government ministers and several NGOs. The guests included Christine Kaseba, the First Lady of Zambia, Nkandu Luo, Zambia's Minister of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, and Zhou Yuxiao, the Chinese ambassador to Zambia.

Though Zambia boasts a successful tourism industry, the benefits do not extend throughout the Mukuni chiefdom located in Zambia's Southern Province, and many of the 50,000 inhabitants live in poverty.

"It is my hope that our experience will encourage and enlighten them in pursuing their Indigenous self-determination," stated Coon Come.

In order to address this, Mukuni and his chiefs have come up with a five-year strategic plan to tackle these concerns with the hope of creating a "sustainable chiefdom development, with the people living contented and happy lives and enjoying better living standards."

Also on the agenda were issues concerning the conservation of natural resources, agriculture, education, health and HIV/AIDS, culture and gender empowerment.



Tribe member and Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come

Coon Come said the visit eye-opening and called the experience humbling.

During his four-day visit to Africa, between August 28 and September 1, the Grand Chief had the opportunity to participate in several preparatory meetings leading up to the 2014 UN's World Conference on Indigenous Peoples next September in New York City.

# Hydlo and FRIENDS Online

## Waskaganish: from the river to the table

Waskaganish:  
âh mîchisuhîwâch sîpî



A new video at [www.hydloandfriends.com](http://www.hydloandfriends.com)

Each month, a new video will be added to Hydloandfriends.com. To learn more, listen to the Hydlo and Friends radio show on JBCCS. Its hosts, Luke MacLeod and Luc Duquette, discuss the environmental follow-up activities related to the Eastmain-1-A/Sarcelle/Rupert project, as well as the concerns of land users with regard to Hydro-Québec's facilities and activities.

**Next show:**  
Wednesday, October 16,  
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The contest runs from October 4, 2013 through December 8, 2013 and is open to members of the Cree nation living in one of the Native communities of Eeyou Istchee who are at least 18 years of age. Limit of one entry per person per day. The winner of the first draw will be announced at 8:00 a.m. on November 13, 2013 during the Hydlo and Friends radio show on JBCCS. The winner of the second draw will be announced at 8:00 a.m. on December 11, 2013, during the Hydlo and Friends radio show on JBCCS.



PAQ General Assembly

## A brighter future for PAQ

Since the announcement of a new building for the Projets Autochtones du Québec (PAQ) homeless shelter in early July, the project is proceeding on schedule. After a turbulent year during which the organization was on the verge of closing, the management staff and volunteers were able to turn the situation around, bringing a renewed hope for the coming year.

Since its last annual assembly, PAQ succeeded in acquiring charitable status to help maintain a source of income for the non-profit organization. The homeless shelter provides food and accommodations for Montreal's homeless Aboriginals as well as giving them a connection to their cultures through events and workshops.

PAQ's much-needed work has led to sizeable funding from the City of Montreal. "Today, I'm proud to be able to say that PAQ is among the recognized institutions of the Montreal community," said PAQ President Joey Saganash.

It is not just the city that has recognized PAQ's valuable contribution to the fabric of the Native community of Quebec. Makivik, the legal representative of Quebec's Inuit, has pledged \$80,000 over two years. Hunters and trappers from all over Quebec have been sharing wild game with the shelter to allow residents occasional meals of traditional foods.

With new funding, a new building on the horizon and a wealth of hard-working staff and partners, PAQ is looking to 2014 with a renewed vigour.

## Conservatives ignore violence against Aboriginal women

Aboriginal people across Canada are in an uproar over the federal government's recent decision to dismiss recommendations from the United Nations to develop a comprehensive national review to end violence against Aboriginal women.

The recommendations were suggested after the UN conducted its periodic review of Canada's human rights record, which happens every four years. The review also investigates issues such as poverty, immigration, prostitution and the criminal justice system.

According to the Native Woman's Association of Canada (NWAC), there are currently 582 documented cases of the missing and murdered, with nearly half of those cases remaining unsolved.

Canada's Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, Elissa Goldberg, who gave the decision on behalf of the government, said that although Canada takes the issue seriously, provincial and municipal governments would be better suited in getting results on the issue.

"It's shocking that Canada refuses to act to end violence against Indigenous women," said NDP Status of Women critic Niki Ashton. "It is time for the Conservatives to tackle systemic issues facing Indigenous peoples and establish a nation-to-nation relationship."

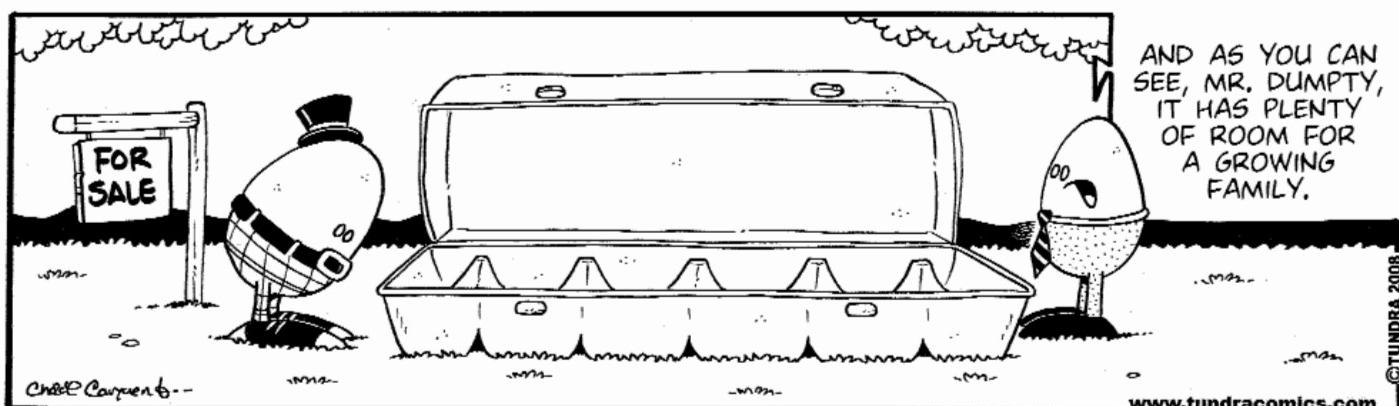
Letters have been written to Prime Minister Stephen Harper by NWAC, Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Shawn Atleo and Amnesty International in an effort to change the government's policy.

"There is strong support for this action domestically among provincial and territorial leaders and the Canadian public and strong international support, not to mention a multitude of reports and investigations that urge Canada to act," Atleo said.

Yet the Conservatives continue to defend their position, claiming that they have already done enough on the issue.

"Violence against Aboriginal women is a crisis in Canada," said NDP Aboriginal Affairs critic Jean Crowder. "Until the Conservatives accept their responsibilities outlined by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we cannot move forward in a positive and meaningful way."

Comic strip courtesy of Tundra Comics: [www.tundracomics.com](http://www.tundracomics.com)



**FEATURE**



# AN-ANIMATED-LIFE

MONTRÉAL'S COMICCON 2013 IS  
ALL ABOUT BEING YOUR HERO



In past incarnations it may have appeared as a marginal convention for comic-book nerds, but now the annual Comiccon exhibition is a mainstream cultural event, drawing major celebrities to promote the latest comic-related games, films, costumes and literature.

This year, there was an inexhaustible choice of fan experiences available, from celebrity meet-and-greets for autographs and photos to merchandise to satisfy the most obsessed collectors.

Some 42,000 patrons attended this year's Comiccon, which ran September 13-15 at Montreal's Palais des congress, to live out their superhero/super-villain/sci-fi/anime-related fantasies.

The big names included Gillian Anderson (*The X-Files*), Christopher Lloyd (*Back to the Future*), George Takei (*Star Trek*), Jason Momoa (*Game of Thrones*), Manu Bennett (*Spartacus*), Sean Astin (*The Lord of the Rings*), Lou Ferrigno (*The Incredible Hulk*), Felicia Day (*The Guild*), Ray Park (*Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*), Dave Prowse (*Star Wars*), Edward James Olmos and Tahmoh Penikett (*Battlestar Galactica*), Jason David Frank (*Power Rangers*), Michael Berryman (*The Hills Have Eyes*), IronE Singleton (*The Walking Dead*), Jason Mewes (*Jay and Silent Bob*) and Margot Kidder (*Superman*). There were also wrestlers – Mick Foley, Maryse Ouellet and Kevin Nash.

You could also get your photo taken with Robot Chicken's Robot Chicken, the iconic DeLorean car from *Back to the Future* or the 1959 Cadillac Miller-Meteor Professional "Ectomobile" from *Ghostbusters*.

Among the friendlier faces at the event was actually one who scared me as a child – Lou Ferrigno, the original Incredible Hulk from the 1970s TV series.

Still bulging with muscle, the 61-year-old actor had the demeanour of a placid puppy. He was so approachable you almost wanted to cuddle him. While he said the days of green body paint may be over, the Hulk was brimming with enthusiasm for the fan-filled love-fest.

He even apologized for being the subject of my childhood nightmares.

"But you, kept watching, right?" he chided. Of course I did, but I left out the part about watching him through my fingers.

"I am very excited to be here because about four years ago this event only attracted about 800 people; but now we are seeing over 40,000 and this is only Friday afternoon," said Ferrigno. "I just love Montreal because it's got so much spirit and integrity. The people work so hard to make you feel appreciated and I really respect that."

Ferrigno's enthusiasm was infectious. But meeting your heroes is only half the fun as a growing num-





to him. I also enjoy the brutal rage that this character has," said Peter.

And, since the event organizers thought it would be awesome to have an individual Wolverine display that patrons could get their photos taken at, they gave the grisly fellow his own booth.

One of the most popular costumes for this year's event was Marvel Comic's Deadpool as there were various incarnations of the red spandex regalia to be seen throughout the event.

One of the Deadpools we met was Eric, accompanied by his girlfriend dressed appropriately as Domino.

"I have been collecting Marvel Comics for about 15 years and Deadpool is my favourite character. And, because they made a Deadpool game this year, I decided that it was the right time to come as this character," explained Eric.

As for Eric's girlfriend, who wanted her real identity to remain anonymous, it seemed her attire was all about pleasing her man.

"My inspiration is pretty much the same as his. Eric taught me all about this milieu and so I decided to do this costume to go with his," said Domino.

Among the more amusing sights at this event were the hoards of half-dressed characters carrying their helmets as a jam-packed convention floor, summery weather and heavy attire created sweltering conditions. I made a mental note not to approach any of these fellas (yes, they were all guys) as the wet

ber of patrons are just as enthusiastic about being their heroes. There was no budget limit when it came to crazy get-ups to look as much like their icons as possible.

Frequently dubbed "Halloween for Grownups," this year's event featured a limitless range of characters in the convention hall. One fan, Peter from Blainville, even had his own booth outside of the hall to show off his Wolverine costume and gear.

"Wolverine has become a little part of me now. I have been co-playing (role playing) this character for a while now and people have been telling me for years that I bear a striking resemblance

hair generally was a warning sign of detectable body odour. I would also imagine that a lot of these outfits are quite difficult to disinfect.

More than ever, this year's event reminded us that, in the end, it's all about separating fans from their money. Retailers are tuned into the big bucks to be found in nerdy pockets. Everywhere you turned there was another superhero-themed garment, toy or house wear (think Hans Solo trapped in a cake mould) for sale. Or you could purchase Halloween costumes, weapons, slippers, socks, pyjamas, figurines, coffee cups, baby bibs, earrings, necklaces, DVDs, books, board games, video games and just about anything else with a licensed trademark.

Being a fan of "super-powered" snuggly warmth, I have to say that I did fall for some of the bathrobes. I even tried on the Chewbacca robe and, much to my overheated surprise, found it much like putting on a winter jacket.

There were all kinds of bathrobes at this event – from the ultra-flashy Spiderman and Wolverine varieties resembling something a pro wrestler might wear into the ring, to the more functional varieties.

Comiccon is so overwhelming that it's almost like walking into a live-action internet. The selection of items such as cartoon/superhero T-shirts is endless. From vintage superhero originals from the 1960s to pretty much everything



produced in the '70s, '80s, '90s and 2000s were begging for a new home.

For those who couldn't make it to the event, [www.stylinonline.com](http://www.stylinonline.com) has all of this merchandise available online.

For us, the real treat was the folks offering their own handmade merchandise. Seeing the big commercial stuff is fine, but meeting the individual writers, game producers and event promoters makes the experience so unique.

Trying to get his own comic book off the ground was Daniel Bernard, an old high-school friend.

"My new comic book, *The Chieftains*, is actually an epic reimagining of the story of Deborah from the Bible in 24 full-colour issues," explained Bernard.

"This is a historically based comic book that places the characters into the context of the Bronze Age; it's what you would get out of a fantasy novel or historical fiction."

Bernard, who has a PhD in Religious Studies, has drawn from his academic career when it came to his newest venture.

"I will be honest, a recession is not the time to have a PhD. There is very little work and there are way fewer jobs here in Quebec. So, I wrote about what I had learned," said Bernard.

He hopes his project will be out sometime in 2014.

Fans of paper-prod-

uct board games could rejoice in the selection available, including two locally developed gems. We spoke to two designers sharing their own board game hub at the event – Andrew Valkauskas and Patrice Combatalade from *Fate of the Norns* and *Gladiators* respectively.

"*Fate of the Norns* is a Viking RPG meets table-top game and it employs actual rune stones instead of dice. The rune stones on the table are made from stone and wood and the mechanics of the game are based on them."

"What we have done here is created a very evocative tale of the end times of Ragnarok. It is the end where the gods and the giants fight and the players can take on the roles, siding with one or the other," said Valkauskas.

Combining elements of Magick the Game, Dungeons & Dragons and actual historical myths, this board game is now in its 20th year and featured breathtaking images and endless aspects of game play.

Combatalade, on the other hand, was just about to launch his new game, *Gladiators*.

"This is a game where the players fight for glory in the age of Rome. There are 12 playable gladiators, all of whom are drawn from history. And each one fights in his own particular style," said Combatalade.

What is unique to the game are the specially made dice, to play you roll five of them and

they come up with the symbols. On the dice are swords for attacking, feet for moving and stars to activate special abilities.

Combatalade is hoping to launch his new game within the month.

Among the best booths we encountered were three strung together by a shop, a special-effects atelier and a Live Action Role Playing (LARP) group. Montreal's medieval boutique Dracolite produced a large-scale display to showcase the collaborative efforts of the three businesses.

According to Charles of Dracolite, 18th century gear, play weapons and accompanying armour have all moved from the marginal into the mainstream.

"You see it everywhere, there is now a lot of good stuff being used by a lot of cool people," Charles said.

Dracolite provided materials used in part for *Game of Thrones* fan film, *A Tale of Benjen Stark*, which the three were also promoting.

His friends at Ateliers Nemesis provided many of the props and are also responsible for making many of the masks available at the store, including a mesh Medusa on display that looked right out of Hollywood.

"Those masks were made for a show based on Amos Daragon, from the books by Bryan Perro. There are some masks that can be worn, like the reptile and the crow masks. People will often wear

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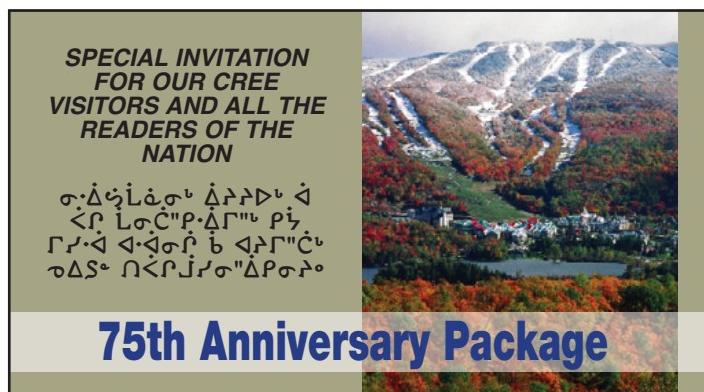


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them for live-action role-playing games," said Jonathan from Ateliers Nemesis.

Then there was Éric Dubé from Bicolline, the LARP group he runs for a week every July in St-Mathieu du Parc in the Mauricie region. It's for those who want to experience non-stop 18th century battle – minus the injuries or shoddy medical care.

"If you were to imagine a kind of LARP Mecca, about 2000 people come to the event for an entire seven days to go back in time and live and breathe this game," said Dubé.

More on this event can be found at [www.bicolline.org/](http://www.bicolline.org/)

Finally, among the acres of enthusiastic kitsch at Comiccon, one group stood out for the way it used their

Hollywood-grade film costumes for a charitable purpose.

Ernst Peters of the 501st Legion was on hand to display some of the costumes his group had made.

"We are a charity group from the South Shore that builds incredible superhero costumes to go and visit children in the hospital and often does work with the Make-A-Wish Foundation," said Peters. "We also do Toys for Tots and whatever else is fun. Our people do individual work on these costumes, cast the plates and do the resin work and tailoring on their own."

For more on his organization, go to [www.501st.com/charity.php](http://www.501st.com/charity.php)



# DIY database

## Grassroots organizations to build a high-tech resource on missing and murdered women

by Amy German

Boldly going where the federal government cowardly refuses to visit, two grassroots organizations intend to build their own database of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.

The groups – Families of Sisters in Spirit and No More Silence – decided to create an information resource independent of government funding and control. “The purpose is to allow family members to have access to that information,” said Audrey Huntley of No More Silence.

“We were talking about how there are so many different takes on the numbers,” Huntley added. “You always hear the numbers provided by NWAC (Native Women’s Association of Canada), which is around 580, but then other people will talk about the thousands, which is quite distracting. In our view, it isn’t about how many there are, but more about the systemic nature of the situation that’s important.”

While NWAC had developed its own database of missing/murdered Aboriginal women in a federally funded project that ran from 2005 to 2010 under the moniker Sisters in Spirit (SIS), Ottawa cut the funding in 2010, seized the data and handed over the responsibility to the RCMP.

Not only did this abandon the families of those women without the means to tell the stories of these women, but the feds also shelved the proposal for an Aboriginal-specific database. Instead, they gave the RCMP \$10 million to create a database for all missing persons in Canada. However, the new database will not include any of the SIS data that outlined the systemic issues underlying the gruesome phenomenon.



Missing: Shannon Alexander



Missing: Maisy Odjick

Law enforcement will not have any access to this data, nor do the two groups plan on working with police agencies. As Huntley explained, they see the police as part of the problem when it comes to missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

“They are one of the reasons as to why these cases are under-investigated and, in some cases, it is even law enforcement that is perpetrating the crime, as in the case of the Human Rights Watch report on northern communities that showed it was the RCMP who was violating women,” said Huntley.

One of its purposes will be able to provide accurate information on missing/murdered women to the media.

The high-tech database is currently being built with the aid of Métis researcher Dr. Janet Smylie. It will be more complex with detailed information on each case. In addition, it will include profiles of suicides by victims of violence.

“We know that there are so much more than 580 women missing because that number is years old,” said Bridget Tolley, who founded Families of Sisters in

Spirit as a means of providing support to victims’ families after Ottawa pulled the plug on the NWAC database.

Over the last three years, Tolley has devoted her life to advocating for these families and providing them with support unavailable elsewhere. She does so in part because she has first-hand experience with tragedy: her own mother was struck and killed by an RCMP vehicle in 2001.

“I would like to see this information out there. Girls like Maisy (Odjick) and Shannon (Alexander – both missing since 2008 from Maniwaki); I would like to see their files updated with any little thing to keep this alive.

“Right now, if I had a missing daughter, I don’t see anything out there that would help me. And, because it can just be so depressing and so hard on some days, if I could just go to that website and see my daughter’s profile and make sure she is not forgotten, that is what would make my heart feel better,” said Tolley.

For more information: [nomoresilence.blogspot.ca](http://nomoresilence.blogspot.ca) and [familiesofsistersinspirit.com](http://familiesofsistersinspirit.com)

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Volume 16, No. 01

2000 - 2002

## The *Nation* Timeline

**Jan. 14, 2000:** Judge hammers Quebec over forestry – Province's Superior Court rules logging regime in Cree territory illegal and unconstitutional

**Feb. 11, 2000:** Fight to remove judge continues – Federal and provincial governments want Jean-Jacques Croteau replaced on Cree forestry cases, due to perceived pro-Cree prejudice



From the Class of 2001

**March 10, 2000:** "Goodbye, Mavis – we love you" – Marking the untimely passing of the Cree Health Board's diabetes coordinator Mavis Verroneau

**March 24, 2000:** Crees protest Judge Croteau's removal – Chiefs launch international campaign against province's forestry policy and justice system, threaten to tear up JBNQA

**April 7, 2000:** Logging grinds to halt across Quebec – Forest exploitation permits cease to be valid due to public and private sector bungling

**May 5, 2000:** Alma struggles to keep out Air Creebec – Alma mayor denies Creebec use of town's airport for daily Alma-Montreal flights, threatens Air Canada boycott

**May 19, 2000:** Gay marriage coming to a home near u? – Ottawa plans to amend Cree-Naskapi Act to comply with same-sex benefits bill, without bands' consent

**June 16, 2000:** AFN "has been bought": Coon Come – National Chief candidate calls AFN corrupt and ineffective

**June 30, 2000:** Quebec gives in one hour before march – Province agrees to fork over \$2.2-million to complete Waswanipi youth centre ahead of protest walk

**July 28, 2000:** The people have spoken – Matthew Coon Come defeats Phil Fontaine, becomes new National Chief

**Sept. 8, 2000:** GCCEI/CRA Annual General Assembly 2000 – Crees aim to take back control of Eeyou Istchee, pursue self-governance and self-determination

**Sept. 22, 2000:** Mistissini speckle trout being studied – First Nation takes fish conservation into its own hands in face of government inaction

**Oct. 6, 2000:** "Indian bashing" erupts at logging meet – Non-Native mayors and forestry officials insult Crees at Matagami logging meeting

**Nov. 17, 2000:** Waskaganish band to rein in police – Changes to the force are recommended amid police brutality allegations

**Dec. 15, 2000:** Community spirit soars as Waskaganish road opens – 25 years after the James Bay Agreement, a moving ceremony launches Waskaganish's road

**Dec. 29, 2000:** First Cree artists and craftsmen assembly of Eeyou Istchee – The Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association is founded, with 20 members representing different sectors and communities

**Feb. 23, 2001:** Crees outmanoeuvre Quebec in Europe – Crees promised support from EU, for the right to self-determination, in the event of Quebec separation

**March 9, 2001:** Class action brewing on rez schools – Waswanipi Crees hope to spearhead Quebec's first residential-schools lawsuit

**April 20, 2001:** Indian Affairs Minister Robert Nault visit Eeyou Istchee – Nault tours Chisasibi and Chibougamau, promises \$2.1-million to correct housing crisis

**June 1, 2001:** Mistissini's reception centre – \$4-million sports/education/arts facility aims to foster strong sense of cultural identity for Cree children

**June 15, 2001:** Nemaska evacuated – Forest fire emergency tests community's resources and organizational skills, Nemaska passes with flying colours

**June 29, 2001:** Cree Spoken Here wins at Banff – Festival names Rezolution Pictures' first documentary Best Canadian Aboriginal Language Television Production

**Aug. 24, 2001:** Hip hop to the bop rez style – Exploring Native hip hop, profiling Eeyou Istchee-based group FBI Jedeyez

**Sept. 7, 2001:** Let's do launch – The James Bay Cree

Communications Society launches its regional radio network with a live broadcast of a concert by the Chisasibi Rockers

**Oct. 19, 2001:** National Chief keeps Native issues on front burner – Coon Come reminds Canadian Bar Association of tragic suffering faced by Native people in Canada on a daily basis

**Nov. 30, 2001:** How to decide the future of the AIP and the Cree



Ted Moses

– The Nation canvasses Cree leaders on the progress of AIP consultations; Mukash breaks ranks by opposing deal

**Dec. 28, 2001:** Rupert River protest – Demonstrators oppose the river diversion proposed in the AIP

**Jan. 11, 2002:** Stewards of the land? What do Crees believe? – Arguments for and against the AIP

**Feb. 8, 2002:** Youth conference a bust, again – Grand Chief Ted Moses is unapologetic about his absence at a gathering of youth representatives from all nine communities

**Feb. 22, 2002:** The new Eeyou Istchee Consortium – Formed in the wake of the Cree-Quebec Agreement in Principle, group aims to orchestrate Cree resources

**March 22, 2002:** Financial woes can cripple band councils – Withholding of loans and funding

among the consequences of tardy year-end reports and debt

**May 3, 2002:** Should O.J. be concerned? – Ouje-Bougoumou preliminary health study suggested by study on toxic contaminants from gold and copper mining

**May 31, 2002:** Dr. Ted's new world order – Grand Chief Ted Moses named an Officer of the Order of Quebec by Premier Bernard Landry

**July 12, 2002:** Taking back the language – Former Cree School Board chair Luke MacLoed makes Dean's Honour Roll, stresses importance of Cree as language of instruction

**July 26, 2002:** Fire in the sky, smoke on the water...in Boston – Nemaska particularly hard hit by James Bay region fires that sent smoke as far as Massachusetts and New York

**Aug. 23, 2002:** Cree Health Services suffer almost 30 years of underfunding – Financial shot in the arm expected following talks with province

**Sept. 6, 2002:** Don't touch that dial – Moses claims victory, Mukash challenges results in closest Grand Chief election in modern Cree history

**Oct. 4, 2002:** MoCreebec: Just who are they? – Chief Randy Kapashesit to James Bay Cree: "We should all see each other as equals"

**Nov. 1, 2002:** The kids are all right! – Marcel Happyjack elected Youth Grand Chief of the Cree after six years as Youth Chief in Waswanipi: "Anything is possible," he says.

**Dec. 27, 2002:** No racism allowed anywhere – David Ahenakew praises Hitler's handling of Jews: "At that moment he stopped being a respected Elder," says editorial.

# Ending the aggression

## Cree women invite men to help end violence against women

by Amy German

The Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association held their sixth Annual General Assembly in Mistissini September 20-22. The event made an important step by involving men in the struggle to stop violence against women.

Led by Wally RabbitSkin, a group of Cree male Nishiiyuu walkers made their way from Chisasibi to Mistissini on a traditional wellness walk with the goal of raising awareness to end violence against women.

According to the CWEIA president Virginia Wabano, this was a project that started last year when RabbitSkin addressed the CWEIA at the 2012 AGA in Chisasibi.

After getting a cash infusion for the project through the Status of Women Canada, the men's Nishiiyuu walkers were once again set to take to the trails of Eeyou Istchee for 21 days with the venture ending at CWEIA's AGA.

The goal of the walk was to present an apology on behalf of the men of the Cree Nation as a means of encouraging "healing, reconciliation and resolution in Eeyou/Eenou Istchee."

RabbitSkin read out this apology on behalf of the walkers. And it was Abby Masty, the young girl who walked with the Nishiiyuu walkers from Whapmagoostui to Ottawa, who accepted the apology on behalf of the CWEIA, because of her own goal to end violence in her trek to Ottawa.

"This journey walk from Chisasibi to Mistissini is to make amends to Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association, and to others, and especially to our Mother Earth for the many years of abuse they have endured," said RabbitSkin. "This gives us a new beginning and an opportunity to move forward together in partnership for a gender-balanced society and a harmonious relationship and connection at home,



community, nation, and our precious Mother Earth.

"We declare our most sincere apologies and we will commit to demonstrate our support in ending all forms of violence against women."

RabbitSkin's apology was a culmination of the thoughts and emotions of the men he walked with.

"Without a doubt, we are all aware of the legacies and the impacts of residential schools and intergenerational traumas, but this can no longer define our destiny as Eeyouch/Eenouch," RabbitSkin told the gathering. "We, Nishiiyuu men coming forward, we believe that we can define our destiny and leave a legacy of hope for the future generations that will no longer be shattered by violence. Nishiiyuu men believe in creating awareness and educating our people, and other nations, is the key to healing for all First Nations People."

"In moving towards healing and in the spirit of Miyyupimatsiun in Eeyou/Eenou Istchee, reconciliation and resolution of ending all forms of violence against all women and girls, the Nishiiyuu men agree to approach this a collective effort with Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association to create awareness in ending all forms of violence against all sguwetch (women) in Eeyou/Eenou Istchee, and all the four directions of Mother Earth."

According to Wabano, the apology was followed by personal testimonials about violence by these men as well as individual apologies to many of the women in attendance who had come to witness the event. Those women were presented with scarves as a means of making amends.

"While I can only speak for myself, I have shed a lot of tears over the last few days. It wasn't just from pain; I just felt so

many emotions at this event. There was joy over the reconciliation and also sadness for the women who we lost because of violence. There was also a lot of compassion when you could see all of the love that these men had and all of their feelings (on display)," said Wabano.

According to Rabbitskin, reading the apology was a liberating experience as he said it was as though he had held on to so much bitterness in the past. With this event it was time to let it go.

"Even with just my silence over these many years, even though I had not done anything physically to a woman in many years, it felt like I was still participating in the violence because I wasn't standing up with these women. I wanted to have this apology and so this has liberated me," confessed Rabbitskin.

At the same time, he said this act was a means for the men to reclaim their roles as protectors and providers.

While these men and women had the opportunity to feast and celebrate the event together, this AGA gave them the opportunity to launch a special project aimed at reducing violence in the communities in the future.

The project's goal is to reduce violence in high-risk neighbourhoods within the communities of Mistissini, Chisasibi and Whapmagoostui and it will be carried out in conjunction with the CRA Department of Justice.

"We are launching this project with them to develop a program that we will be able to use in the three communities and then from there, carry it out in the

other communities in Eeyou Istchee," said Wabano.

There were a wide variety of other issues addressed at the three-day



"This journey walk from Chisasibi to Mistissini is to make amends to Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association, and to others, and especially to our Mother Earth for the many years of abuse they have endured."

event. According to Wabano, one of the most notable ones was the current lack of support for families with special-needs children.

"This issue was brought forth by the parent of a child with special needs, talk-

ing about the lack of resources and support available in the communities. We know that there are various organizations that work with children with special needs. And so what we learned is that they would like CWEIA to address this and advocate for the betterment of the lives of our children," said Wabano.

Another focus is to develop a charter for the children of the Cree Nation as a means of protecting them and creating a guarantee to keep them on Cree land. Ottawa-based Cree lawyer Arlene Faries is researching ways to create and implement the initiative.

Other issues at the AGA included ways to support single-parent families, promoting Abby Masty's Dream Foundation and how to carry out the message of the event's keynote speaker, Washa Sibi Elder Emma Mapachee, who spoke about the power of forgiveness.

The women also had the pleasure of enjoying a fashion show put on by Whapmagoostui fashion designer Rachel Kawapit, creator of RK Creeations.

Cree creations designed for the Cree world were modeled by Cree delegates, including parkas, mitts and mukluks.

"I had a wonderful time," Wabano concluded. "The host community of Mistissini showed great hospitality and kept our savouring mouths craving for more delicious food that was prepared by local caterers. I look forward to the seventh Annual General Assembly, which will be in partnership with the Local Women's Association of Whapmagoostui."

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# Quebec in Question



## A panel of scholars attacks Quebec's colonial history

by Jesse Staniforth

"When we first talked about this event," said scholar David Austin, addressing an over-capacity crowd at Montreal's Concordia University, "it was, at least to my mind, going to be a small discussion. I think we can thank Madame Pauline Marois for the fabulous turnout."

If ever there was a fruitful time for a discussion of race and colonization in Quebec, it was in the wake of the PQ government's introduction of the so-called "Charter of Quebec Values".

Though 60 chairs were set up, nearly 100 people crammed into the classroom to hear a three-speaker panel entitled "Colonialism in Québec: Myths, Misgivings, and Nationalism." Austin, a Caribbean-Canadian onetime youth-outreach worker who is now a faculty member of Concordia's Centre for Oral History, had just published a new book

titled, *Fear of a Black Nation: Race, Sex, and Security in Sixties Montreal*.

Also presenting lectures were Délice Mugabo, a board member of the Fédération des femmes de Québec (FFQ) and a member of the FFQ's Racialized Women's Committee, and Darryl Leroux, an academic from Saint Mary's University in Halifax.

Though the three speakers tackled very different topics, they were united in examining the idea that Quebec's majority white francophone society is the product of colonialism. All three disputed or refuted this idea from several perspectives: Mugabo spoke about the difficulty of getting feminists in Quebec to commit to serious discussion of race and colonization; Leroux denied that Quebec could be colonized by the English because it already existed on top of

Indigenous nations it had itself colonized; and Austin discussed the way that traditional discussions about what Quebec was depended on non-white people being invisible or unacknowledged.

Beginning the discussion, Mugabo introduced the term "intersectionality," which she defined as meaning that "we are all positioned at the intersection of race, class, nationality, religious background, sexuality, ability and so on. Oppressions occur at those intersections, but so do power relationships between individuals and groups." Intersectionality, then, means trying to recognize not only how power relationships that oppress people don't exist on their own, but intersect one another to create more powerful forms of domination.

In Quebec feminism, Mugabo said, there has been an attempt to make intersectionality a guiding principle, and that notion led to events like the 2004 signing of the Protocol de Solidarité between the FFQ and the Femmes Autochtones du Québec, which was supposed to signal a new relationship between the two organizations and their members.

However, she said, there remains a colonial racism in many aspects of the Quebec feminist movement that is rarely expressed out loud, but shapes the way discussions and decisions take place.

"There is a significant body of individuals and groups who refuse intersectionality because they do not want to have a serious discussion about the legacy of colonialism and ongoing racism," Mugabo said. She noted that an indicator of this has been the reluctance of feminists to engage in a discussion of whiteness and white privilege.

"A very concrete and basic example of this is the refusal by the majority [of feminists] to speak of white women in Quebec as just that: 'white women.'" The Quebec feminist movement's unwillingness to recognize white privilege, she argued, is due to the movement's ties to Quebec nationalism, which "requires Quebec white people to be regarded as oppressed and colonized, and makes it hard to recognize the white privilege that Québécois people necessarily possess."

Particularly difficult for some members of the feminist movement, Mugabo said, was freeing themselves from the nationalist narrative. That story goes that, "Anglos colonized Native people and did the same with francophones. Ottawa now treats Native people like minors and there's nothing we can really do about it until we achieve independence." She quoted her co-panelist David Austin in calling this "a tale of innocence and victimhood that conveniently omits [Quebec's history of] the colonization of Indigenous peoples, the practice of slavery and racial exclusion."

Interviewed later, Mugabo said that whether or not Indigenous women know the word "intersectionality," they – like black feminists and other women of

colour – have always been forced to understand it in real-life terms. "Being in a position where we were dominated and oppressed meant that we had to take into account that struggle had to happen within our communities. And it wasn't just a struggle to liberate ourselves, but also our communities, because we're not going anywhere without them. So that's what's important to me in terms of alliances. The question becomes: 'When we struggle together, how do we do it in a way so that we don't lose ourselves?'"

Noting Austin's advice to "fight where you are, and start from where you are," she said, "When you start from where you are, you have to look around and ask: What is happening? Where do you situate yourself in that struggle? In my context, colonization is what is hap-

status along with France in a way that situates it as a colonizer," promoting a "shared European civilizational heritage" and encouraging initiatives similar to those pursued in France. (He reminded the crowd that France banned "conspicuous religious symbols" in schools beginning in 2004, in a law announcing state secularism very similar to Quebec's Charter.)

Today, Leroux said, France is full of "Sites of Memory" that exist to allow Quebec francophones to search for their genealogical origins in the French countryside, and is supported by an impressive genealogical framework in Quebec that encourages these searches. What this amounts to, argued Leroux, is a redefinition of white Quebec francophones as "fundamentally European – focussing very narrowly on the bio-racial dimensions of the French-Quebec rela-

How, then, asked Leroux, can white Quebec francophones see themselves as colonized? "Can a population be colonized that already displaced the Indigenous population themselves?" Even considering what he called "the many paradoxes of race in Quebec," Leroux said the story of the colonization of Quebec doesn't work.

pening, so that is part of what I struggle against."

Darryl Leroux took the discussion in a more historical direction, noting that since the 1960s, Quebec has been strongly allied with France and presented in many cases as a form of French colony in North America. This alliance benefited those in Quebec who saw France as a strong global ally in the cause of independence, while it also benefited France, which had lost so many of its African colonies to anti-colonial uprisings and wanted to continue believing in itself as a beacon of civilizing values.

"As colonized nations rose up against it," Leroux said, "France turned increasingly to Quebec to reinforce its exceptional role in world history." In return, he said, "Quebec revels in its international

tionship. This is no longer just a cultural narrative around things like language, ethics and conduct. It's an explicitly blood-based relationship being celebrated here."

How, then, asked Leroux, can white Quebec francophones see themselves as colonized? "Can a population be colonized that already displaced the Indigenous population themselves?" Even considering what he called "the many paradoxes of race in Quebec," Leroux said the story of the colonization of Quebec doesn't work.

"Considering themselves colonized has very serious implications for the Québécois, but more importantly for Indigenous peoples all over what is known as the territory of Quebec," he said, after the talk was over. "My under-

standing of colonization does not work with the idea of the Québécois being colonized, primarily because my idea of colonization involves the displacement or dispossession of people indigenous to the territory, which the Québécois are not."

Leroux also questioned the sovereignist argument that First Nations would fare better in an independent Quebec, noting that it amounts to Quebec nationalists asking Aboriginal people to "just join in with us without changing the basis of what we means." Importantly, he said, the question asks Aboriginal people to support a national project whose proponents are "not going to deal openly and explicitly with the fact that we have a history of colonizing, displacing and dispossessing Indigenous people, whether through hydroelectric projects or historical forms of colonization that basically led to massive deaths in Indigenous communities, intentional or not."

Ending the night, Austin brought the discussion in close to the issue of day-to-day public life in Quebec, asking who gets noticed and who gets heard, and why.

"The master narrative in Quebec and Canadian history is profoundly shaped by race," he said. "English and French people perceived and understood themselves as distinct races, while Indigenous people and people of African descent, including slaves, were invisible – or unvisible: they were people who were visible and present, but not acknowledged."

Building on what Leroux had pointed out about the ethnic Europeaness of Quebec nationalism, Austin recalled former Premier Lucien Bouchard's speech to a women's group in October 1995, during which Bouchard said, "Do you think it makes any sense that we have so few children in Quebec? We're one of the white races that has the fewest children. This doesn't make any sense."

That comment expressed, Austin said, a widely held fear among white Quebec francophones about biological identity being contaminated by non-white people entering the gene pool. Though the comment was controversial at the time, it was not considered sufficiently shocking to harm Bouchard politically: he remains to this day a respected figure in Quebec.

"We have a nationalist narrative in this province that excuses or allows essentially eugenic notions of race," Austin concluded. "The notions of Québécois de souche and pure laine imply race. They're geneticist. We have to stop and think about how that's become common, everyday language."

The problem goes back to invisibility, he argued. "It's not to make a statement that Quebec is any [more racist] than other parts of North America, but we can't neglect the fact that there are particularities and specificities in this province that have to do with being dominated on the one hand by an Anglo minority and an English majority in rest of Canada, and also being a colonizer, having colonized Indigenous people, made them invisible, and written them entirely out of the narrative."

What this means, he said, is that Indigenous people and people of colour who have always been present in Quebec, as well as recently arrived immigrants, are faced with the strange problem of a majority white, francophone society that thinks of itself as a persecuted minority.

"That has profound implications in terms of how the majority interacts with and responds to so-called minorities," Austin said. The continued attempt by majority Quebec society to reinforce the invisibility of Indigenous people, along with Black people and other people of colour, makes it possible for what he called "chez-nous attitudes" toward non-white-francophones to continue to exist.

"Quebec has never been made up only of French Quebecers," he underlined. "But part of what we're seeing today is that when so-called non-French-Quebecers begin to actively occupy public space, it becomes a challenge. It's no coincidence that the Quebec charter is [directed specifically at] non-French-Quebecers and their religious symbols. Behind closed doors, behind walls, that's one thing. But this is about the space they occupy in the public sphere."

However, in spite of the anger and outcry over the Charter of Quebec Values and what it suggests is the PQ government's privileging of white French identity above all others, Austin remains optimistic.

"There can't be a Quebec national identity that doesn't include people of, for example, Turkish, Tamil, Sri Lankan and especially Indigenous origins," he said. The present controversy is an opportunity "for Quebecers to rise to the challenge and think of a different kind of Quebec that is true and in keeping with Quebec as it actually is, and not what the dominant forces are trying to make it into. The onus is on French Quebecers to change. Because Quebec has already changed."

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# Defining secularism

## Debate over the Charter of Quebec Values heats up

by Akiva Levitas

Everywhere you go, you are bound to encounter people going head-to-head or seeing eye-to-eye on the PQ government's proposed Charter of Quebec Values. The debate between those for and against it is causing a firestorm the likes of which Quebecers have not been seen since the 1995 referendum debate.

The PQ ministers responsible for the presentation of the charter – Diane De Courcy, Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities, and Bernard Drainville, Minister responsible for Democratic Institutions and Active Citizenship – held a press conference on September 23 to respond to questions from media organizations representing various ethnic communities.

Before taking in any questions, the ministers went through the five major points of the proposed charter in its current form. "The main word that permeates throughout the Charter is equality," said Drainville. "Equality for women, equality of all religions and those who chose not to be religious. The government is for everyone and on that basis it should be representative of everyone equally."

Despite the relaxed setting, there was an undertone of combativeness. Those in favour of the charter invoked the strict secularism enforced by France. Some proponents of the charter questioned the naming of the legislation as the Charter of Quebec Values when in essence secularism and separation of church and state are a western practice.

"We want the government and public employees to represent Quebec for everyone," responded De Courcy. "This charter reflects Quebec's values as a secular state, however it is in the context of the province so we wanted the name to present it as such."

During the discussion of the legislation's mechanics, such as whether it will establish a secular enforcement agency



Bernard Drainville addresses the media as Dianne De Courcy looks on

("It won't," claimed De Courcy) or where the money for the marketing will come from ("It's an informative campaign," said Drainville), the human element was almost forgotten.

Then Algerian-Canadian reporter Sada Al Mashren spoke of his experience

a slight edge over opponents. Newly formed groups have begun to coalesce with the Gathering for Secularity gaining some high-profile backers, including ex-Supreme Court Justice Claire L'Heureux-Dubé. But a significant group of sovereigntists are vocally opposing the

Outside the province, the charter is bruising Quebec's reputation. Notably, Amnesty International says it abuses human rights.

growing up as a religious Muslim in Quebec. "During my time in high school I put in a request with the administration for a prayer room," Al Mashren said. "When they refused, I didn't get angry at the officials. I just moved my prayers outside in the field or found space off-campus." While the ministers listened to Al Mashren intently, some charter supporters laughed at the questions he had for the government officials.

The debate is creating new divisions in Quebec society. Polls are almost evenly split, showing Charter supporters have

proposal, starting a petition for an "inclusive" Quebec.

Outside the province, the charter is bruising Quebec's reputation. Notably, Amnesty International says it abuses human rights. The federal government is consulting lawyers at the Department of Justice over the charter's validity and how to proceed should the law pass.

Both sides of the debate are gearing up for a fight which will come to a head in the late fall when the proposed law will be put to a vote in the National Assembly.



# EDUCATING STUDENTS

McGill University's annual powwow was quite the event

by Akiva Levitas

"IT'S ALWAYS  
INTERESTING TO COME  
TO THE POWWOW TO  
MEET PEOPLE AND  
STUDENTS FROM ALL  
OVER THE WORLD. THEY  
ALWAYS ASK QUESTIONS  
ABOUT WHO WE ARE AS  
NATIVE PEOPLE."

The sun was out in full force on September 20 beating down on McGill University. It was a perfect day for McGill's 12th Annual Powwow on the lower campus fields giving students and passersby a chance to experience First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures.

Young and old alike participated in the display of traditional Aboriginal culture organized by McGill's First Peoples' House with tiny tots dancing alongside university students to the chants and the beat of the drums by the Red Tail Spirit Singers and the Buffalo Hat Singers.

"It's great to show our culture and share it in the city," said Dana-Marie Williams, event organizer and staff member of McGill's First Peoples' House. "Our aim is

also to make Aboriginal students feel closer to home."

Elder Alex Sonny Diabo opened the annual event that featured dancers, throat singers, drummers and local Aboriginal artisans. "It's always interesting to come to the powwow to meet people and students from all over the world. They always ask questions about who we are as Native People," Diabo said. "We try to explain as much as we can. Sometimes we get caught off-guard and can't answer the question. So we ask them to go out and find the answer so that next time we meet we share in the learning."

Throughout the day students were asking questions, joining the dances and just soaking in the festive atmosphere. "I share



with whoever asks because our teachings are not meant to be kept just to ourselves," said Ian Achneepineskum, a drummer with the Red Tail Spirit Singers.

For many McGill students, the powwow was quite the sight to behold with its dazzling display of colours and enthralling dances. But for participating families that span several generations, the event is about sharing Aboriginal culture and instilling pride in the future generations.

"This is my fifth year coming to the McGill powwow and each year it keeps getting better and bigger," said Alan Harrington, powwow dancer and cultural coordinator at the Montreal Native

Friendship Centre. "The objective behind this event is family and bringing everyone together. You can see right that a powwow is about uniting, having fun and the sharing of cultures."

The passing of tradition from generation to generation came to light as Leonard Bordeau shared his story. "I got a late start when it comes to powwows," said Bordeau, "I was already 50 years old at my first powwow. But my grandson has been coming since he was small."

It was a little over 10 years ago that Bordeau and his grandson, Curren McComber, then just a baby, were photographed together for *the Nation*. "A few years after that he told me he want-

ed to do powwow dancing, so I helped him with the regalia and he learned how to dance," Bordeau said. "The younger ones usually desire to be in the powwows. We don't force our young to participate because then they would only do it reluctantly."

The powwow was the first step this year in a program to help heighten the understanding of First Peoples amongst the McGill student body. From September 23-27, students and the public participated in the third edition of Indigenous Awareness Week, which included workshops, language courses and lectures that offered insight into Aboriginal culture.

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A screenshot of the official Facebook page for 'the NATION magazine'. The page has 2,212 likes. It features a cover image of a black bear's face with the text 'The Bear and the Child' and other news snippets. The bio describes it as an independent Aboriginal publication serving Eeyou Istchee and surrounding areas since 1993, noting it has become a leading news source for issues and actions important to the Crees of Northern Quebec. There are sections for 'About', 'Photos', 'Likes', and 'Events'.

## JOB OPPORTUNITY



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- Experience in staff management
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- Written and spoken Cree and English (fluency of French is an asset)
- Working knowledge of computers and Microsoft Office products

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For more information or to submit your application, please contact:

George Wapachee, Director General, Cree Nation of Nemaska

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Tel: 819-673-2512 ext. 302 Cell: 819-865-7616 Fax: 819-673-2542



## Eastmain honours its partners

by Ernest Webb

Chief Edward Gilpin said Eastmain “wanted to show its appreciation to people who contributed, through the years, to the development of the community.” It did so by inviting people to Mont-Tremblant for a round of golf and a gala on September 12.

The sombre clouds and rain early in the day couldn’t dampen the mood of the players as they lined up to tee off at Le Diable Golf Course. Eventually the weather cooperated and cleared as the day wore on. After the round of golf, the hosts and guests gathered at the Centre des Congrès for a

meal where the honourees received gifts of paintings and tamarack decoys.

The diverse guest list ranged from car dealers to heavy equipment salespeople. Many had forged friendships with the people of Eastmain at the start of their careers. Daniel Ringette, a car dealer from Val-d’Or, said his relationship with Eastmain began when Kenneth Gilpin showed up to buy a truck before other community members also came the same day to purchase their own vehicles. Invitee Violet Pachano, the former chief of Chisasibi, said she “wanted to

honour the invitation” that was extended to her.

Another honoured guest was former Grand Chief Ted Moses. With wife Elsa by his side, Moses spoke about how she understood the work he was trying to accomplish during his time in office.

The evening ended with music from David Hart of Sheshatshiu, Labrador. Deputy Chief Johnny Tomatuk summed it up with a story of his arrival from Moose Factory, observing that Eastmain was so small he “could throw a stone across town, and now you can’t really see across town.”



# JOB OPPORTUNITY



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Persons interested in this position are asked to forward their résumé within the prescribed deadline to the following:

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## UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

### Trees: a life giving resource

by Xavier Kataquapit



I love wood or mistik. I must be part beaver or amisk because I am always wrapped up in projects where wood is the main ingredient.

Trees, of course, are an enormous contributor to our life on this planet and my people have great respect for these tough and often towering giants on the land. From the dawn of time trees have provided humans with warmth though fire and comfort and protection from the elements.

Now that I am living much of the year in a remote area I am reminded of just how important wood is as I heat my home with it. I do my best to harvest trees that have to be cut on my property because they are diseased or past their prime and I also find that dead trees in cut over areas are perfect for my heating needs. These days I am using the chainsaw often to cut tree lengths into smaller logs and then I split these into half or quarter pieces to store so they will dry.

I find that birch and pine are my favourite wood for burning, but most of the time I have a big supply of poplar, which requires more work to get a good fire going. We take for granted our energy luxuries like the gas, oil and electricity that power our world every day. When these items are not at hand or so easy to get then life becomes much more of a challenge. I find it is healthy to spend time in remote areas as it is a big reminder of just how important our technologies and resources are. It is also a time where I can get back to nature and connect with Mother Earth.

This past year I have been doing a lot of renovations and working with wood. I am always amazed that we have such abundance of wood at reasonable prices. For instance, a four-by-eight-foot, half-inch thick sheet of aspenite or OSB is about the same cost as a club sandwich. As long as this type of wood is protected by paint, tile or some type of siding it will last for a very long time. It is only problematic in the sun and rain as it decays rapidly when not protected. Plywood, two-by-fours and two-by-sixes are all favourites of mine to work with.

When I travel in other parts of the world it becomes obvious to me quickly that wood is a very scarce commodity. Most

buildings in much of Europe are constructed of cement or stone. Wood is used for trimming and accents. I have spent time in these houses and apartments in winter months and it felt like I was living in a cave. There is nothing as comfortable and as cozy as a home constructed of wood.

The Europeans and many other peoples of the world over-harvested and destroyed their forests many decades ago. In North America it has been different in that we have not had the time to deplete our forests and we also live in a more civilized era. We owe a lot to our scientists, forestry experts and environmentalists so that we are more concerned with the wellbeing of our forests. We now have reforestation projects to replenish our forests after harvesting. We also have a lot of forestry rules to abide by that produce a more positive outcome in the long term. Our own survival on this planet is directly connected to how we treat all life on earth and trees are a very important part of our existence. Trees remove carbon dioxide from the air and generate oxygen. Without them we would not be able to survive.

As I travel in the north, I am always amazed at the vast towering forests of pine, poplar and birch. We have much to be thankful for as northerners right across Canada as our forests are still healthy to a great degree. However, we must continue to make sure to elect governments that understand what it means to plan for the long term and future generations. We can only do this by having respect for the good earth we live upon, as the results will enable us to carry on with our species and contribute to a blossoming of this great living planet rather than its destruction.



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### S.O.S. Conjugal Violence:

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**Health and Sexuality Resources Center:** 1-888-855-7432

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**Gay Helpline:** 1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

**The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal:** 1-866-403-4688

([www.nwsm.info](http://www.nwsm.info))

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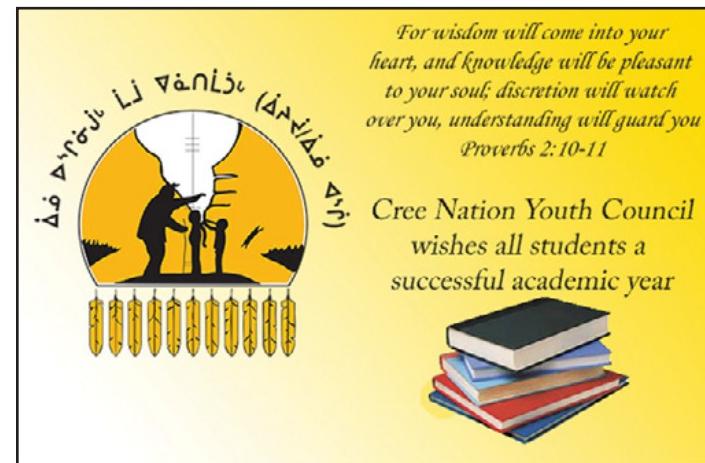
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### Concordia University, Montreal:

The Centre for Native Education has changed its name to the Aboriginal Student Resource Centre (ASRC). The new name is inclusive of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis students the centre serves and recognizes its role as a resource for the Concordia community. For any further details contact: [aboriginalcentre@concordia.ca](mailto:aboriginalcentre@concordia.ca) or 514-848-2424 ext. 7327.



Please be advised that Marjorine Jonah, residing at 220 Missisicabi Street in Waskaganish has presented to the Directeur de l'État Civil a request to change her name to Marjorie Jonah.

Waskaganish, le 14 aout 2012

Marjorine Jonah

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# Iiyuu Companii Tipaachimuun

A presentation of The Board of Compensation and the Cree Regional Economic Enterprises Company

## Opportunities arising from the mining industry for Gestion ADC.



### **Wachiya. On our last show we heard about jobs in the mining industry. Has mining provided new opportunities for Gestion ADC?**

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### **Gestion ADC provides camp services that include catering, janitorial, housekeeping, and facility management. How did this all get started?**

In 1993 the company was established with a partner, DOMCO Food Services. Three years later CCDC, which is owned by CREECO, bought them out and Gestion ADC became a 100% Cree-owned company. If you go to the website at gestionadc.ca you can read that our main purpose is to provide job opportunities for eeyouch in the Cree communities and worksites. We strive for safe, quality, and professional services. In 2008 it was placed 27th among successful Quebec companies by PROFIT magazine.

It is one of the most successful catering and janitorial service companies in Quebec only twenty years after it began

### **That's impressive, especially since the magazine only considers businesses who have increased profit by at least 50% over five years. Can you tell us about your recent joint venture?**

The joint venture between Tawich Development Corporation, located in Wemindji, and Gestion ADC was formed

**IT IS ONE OF THE MOST  
SUCCESSFUL CATERING AND  
JANITORIAL SERVICE COMPANIES  
IN QUEBEC ONLY TWENTY YEARS  
AFTER IT BEGAN.**

on February 13, 2012. This past July the name was changed to Wolf Camp Services Joint Venture. The name was inspired from the local hockey team, the Wemindji Wolves.

### **Who are the people involved in this?**

The officers for Wolf Camp Services are: Dany Tomatuk as President, Robert Baribeau as Vice-President, Darren MacLeod, CMA, as Treasurer, David Bull as a Board Member, and Ruthie Napash as our Corporate Secretary.

### **And what is the benefit of this joint venture?**

Wolf Camp Services is confirmation of Goldcorp's recognition of Cree rights and

interests. The Eleanore project provides jobs for Cree beneficiaries, and Crees are part of the development process.

### **What type of work will Wolf Camp Services be doing at Camp Eleanore?**

Wolf Camp Services' janitorial and housekeeping services began in September 2012 and a month later kitchen services started. We had 85 employees at the beginning.

### **How many people from Wolf Camp Services are currently working at this location?**

For the month of August 2013, Wolf Camp Services had a total of 178 employees, 129 of whom were Aboriginal. The site has a population average of 900 mining and construction workers.

### **Is there anything you'd like to add?**

Yes, there is. I would like to acknowledge and thank the former board members under the Tawich Development Corporation and Gestion ADC joint venture: Mark Wadden, Former President of Tawich Development Corporation, William MacLeod, Former President of CCDC & Gestion ADC, and Anthony MacLeod, Former Director of Gestion ADC, and Jack Blacksmith, Former President of CREECO.

Gestion ADC would also like to congratulate the new Chief of Wemindji, Dennis Georgekish and Deputy Chief, Frank Atsynia.

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